

Debris Mission

Key messages:

- We are making progress, as the activity here is replicated on dozens of sites throughout the island in a bustling effort to remove an incredible amount of debris from around the island
- We are more than half-way through our mission and we will remain here until our mission is complete
- We are actively seeking more efficient ways to dispose of vegetative debris that has beneficial use in the local community while minimally affecting the environment

Talking Points:

- **2,051,172 cubic yards removed**
 - o **2 million cubic yards of debris milestone reached Jan. 9, 2018**
 - o 1 million cubic yards of debris milestone reached on Dec. 9
 - o **Largest collection day to date, 43,183 cubic yards collected Jan. 10**
 - o Second-largest collection day to date, 42,526 cubic yards collected Dec. 15
- The total debris estimated for removal in Puerto Rico is 6.2 million cubic yards, of which 3.9 million cubic yards is tasked to USACE
- We've appealed to the people of Puerto Rico to:
 - o help us find a solution to remove mulched material from collection sites ...
 - o this takes a unified effort that will benefit the island and reduce the impact to limited-space landfills ...
 - o municipalities can help by establishing centralized collection piles for residents to take what they need for residential use ...
 - o encourage farmers and nurseries to utilize the abundance of material for their own operations
 - o separation of debris at collection sites improves production at the temporary disposal sites
- FEMA approved debris removal in 55 out of 78 municipalities
 - o **Active in 52 of 55 municipalities, with negotiations in two municipalities ongoing and operations in one municipality complete**
 - Hormiguero became the first municipality in which USACE debris operations were completed on Jan. 4, 2018
 - o 23 of 78 municipals have declined assistance
 - o Right of Entry deadline for municipalities ended on Dec. 22
- More than 1,300 trucks have been certified to haul debris to collection sites
- Coordinating with U.S. Coast Guard to receive approximately 230 vessels/marine debris at two sites
 - o USACE receives vessels in which the owner had no interest in claiming or could not be reached
 - o Vessels received at transition sites, where contractors collect vessels for disposal
 - o Disposed of

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- Mulching operations are approved in 32 sites, which reduces vegetative debris by roughly half
 - o Nine grinders currently operating on the island, with an additional two grinders inbound
- USACE continues working with municipalities and commercial farmers to find beneficial-use solutions to dispose of the mulch, i.e. reducing the amount of material headed to landfills
- In regard to debris piles catching fire - fire protection measures are in effect on all sites, to include water truck (for medium-sized fires) and extinguishers (for small fires) on hand, and a protocol for the contracted employees to call the fire department if the blaze reaches a certain point
- For incidents on the site; small injuries are handled and work may slow down but not stop ... severe incidents result in 911 calls and a complete work stop

Questions and Answers:

I am a homeowner in Puerto Rico, how can I claim some mulch for my personal use?

Residents interested in obtaining mulch for their personal use can coordinate this request through their municipalities.

I have trucks and am able to support the debris mission in PR, how can I get offer my services?

You may reach out to the contractor to offer your services.

Where is the debris being dumped? On island or shipped elsewhere?

The vegetative debris is broken down by about 50 percent at mulching sites, and of that what is not used for beneficial use by commercial enterprises or residents goes to landfills to be used as cover. Construction/demolition material is collected and hauled to landfills as well.